

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-34 are pending. Claims 6, 7, 12, 28, 31, and 33 are amended. Claims 1, 21, 30, and 31 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the remarks set forth below.

Foreign Priority Claim

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has acknowledged the Applicant's claim for foreign priority.

Information Disclosure Citation

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the reference supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed April 22, 2004, and for providing the Applicant with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith.

Drawings

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has indicated that the drawings have been accepted.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claim 31 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In order to overcome this rejection, the Applicant has amended claim 31 to correct the deficiency pointed out by the Examiner. The Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Obviousness-Type Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1-31 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 2 of U.S. Patent No. 6,661,429 B1. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, the Applicant has submitted a Terminal Disclaimer disclaiming the terminal portion of any patent granted on the present application which would extend beyond the expiration of U.S. Patent No. 6,661,429 B1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The Examiner will note that independent claims 30 and 31 and dependent claims 6, 7, 12, and 28 have been amended merely to place them in better form,

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

All claims of the present application are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

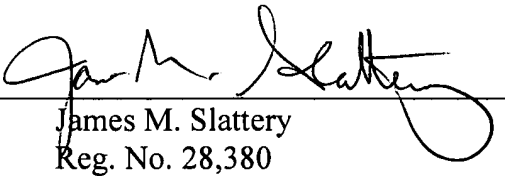
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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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JMS:CTT:bsh



Attachment: Terminal Disclaimer